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ABSTRACT

This report examines the situation of the one-half of the nation's nine million working poor who are female. It begins by looking at just who the working poor are. Two areas of study are education levels and types of jobs. The discussion then shifts to minimum wage earners and their characteristics, the current status of the minimum wage, and the types of jobs that are minimum wage jobs. The report then considers a corollary of the increase in low-wage and minimum wage jobs--the growth of part-time and temporary employment. Next, discussion focuses on unemployment, which is closely linked to part-time and temporary employment. Barriers to higher wage jobs are also identified, including the lack of affordable, reliable child care; occupational segregation and wage discrimination; and the education and training that women and girls receive and that often prepare them for a lifetime of poverty-level wages and poverty. Wider Opportunities for Women makes recommendations for improving conditions for working poor women. These recommendations speak specifically to what can be done by the corporate sector/employers, the public sector/legislators, union leaders, the education and training sector, and the media and communications sector. Many are common sense strategies related to laws already in effect, but an interwoven theme throughout all the sectors is the need for new leadership and advocacy. (A bibliography offers 52 citations.) (YLB)

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No Way Out

Working Poor Women in the United States

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INTRODUCTION

A basic American belief holds that the main cause of poverty is the lack of a job and that the route out of poverty is work. Until recently, this belief was, in fact, quite true for many men in America: Hard work resulted in wages sufficient for a family to live on. However, the belief that work automatically lifts one out of poverty has never been as true for women. Historically, women have been disproportionately represented in a group known as the working poor, that cluster of full-time and part-time workers whose wages keep them poor.

The reasons so many working women are poor are varied and complex. They include the low value society places on many of the jobs women hold and the resulting low wages of those jobs; family responsibilities which shrink many women's job choices; and a changing economy where worker skills are increasingly mismatched for well-paid jobs.

The existence of the working poor has been a well-kept secret in American society. For decades, the public image of the poor has been of people unable or unwilling to work, rather than of workers employed regularly at minimum and low-wage jobs. Working women who remain poor despite steady employment have been virtually invisible, especially in media depictions of the poor and public policy discussions of solutions to poverty.

However, the working poor are becoming more visible as their ranks have expanded. In the decade between 1976 and 1986, the number of working poor people in the U.S. increased by thirty-five percent, from six and a half million to nearly nine million.

Many new members of this population are men and women displaced from manufacturing and goods-producing jobs because of the shift in our national economy.

In 1988, public attention has turned once again toward America's poor, this time with an eye on those who are employed. Much of this new attention, both from the media and from public officials, is focused on the "new poor" -- male breadwinners whose families remain poor despite their full-time employment. Such attention is healthy, for it helps to focus national attention on the causes of poverty in America today and to build support for solutions.

With this new awareness, however, it is important not to overlook women. Half of our nation's nine million working poor are female, and one and a half million of these women head their own families. The causes of their poverty, and its solutions, may be different from those for men. It is important to examine their situation so that appropriate solutions may be found.

This report, "No Way Out: Working Poor Women in the United States," is an attempt to do that. It is part of a larger effort at Wider Opportunities for Women to achieve economic independence for all women. "No Way Out" answers the following questions:

- Who are the working poor?
- What is the statistical profile of working women who live in poverty?
- What kinds of jobs do working poor women have?

- What is the connection between the minimum wage and poverty?
- How does the trend toward part-time and temporary jobs affect a woman's poverty status?
- What are the barriers working poor women face to getting and maintaining higher-wage jobs?
- What are some multi-sector solutions that will help raise working women out of poverty?

Who Are The Working Poor?

Contrary to the modern-day myth that people are poor because they can't or won't get a job, a significant percentage of America's poverty population consists of paid workers. In 1986, nearly nine million people living in poverty were in the labor force, constituting almost sixty percent of all able-bodied poor people of working age.

Half of the working poor are women. In 1986, four and one half million women were in the work force yet living in poverty. And more than half of those women had children.

Working Poor Families

Statistics reveal the link between women in poverty and children who are poor, for poverty is a household measure: Fifty-one percent of all poor families in this country are headed by women; forty percent of these female heads of household are working. Many of these women are poor because they bear the burden of supporting children alone, without financial help from the father. The median annual income for such a full-time working mother in 1986 was only $7,056. This annual salary places her and her children significantly below the official poverty threshold of $8,737 for a family of three, or $11,203 for a family of four.

Although female-headed households are especially vulnerable to poverty, no family is immune. Over twenty percent of all poor families contain two or more workers. Together with single-

worker families, their numbers add up to a significant total. In almost two-thirds of all poor families, at least one family member is in the work force. And most work steadily, changing beds in hospitals and hotels, mopping floors, working a check-out counter, and taking care of other people's children. But, despite regular employment, the earnings of these workers are too low to bring their families out of poverty.

Education Levels

Although working poor women tend to have lower skills than women with higher earnings, almost half are high school graduates. Their high school diplomas do not automatically translate into a living wage, however. In 1986, the median income for all women who graduated from high school was $15,947 for full-time work, while male high school graduates earned a median income of $24,701.

Types of Jobs

Men and women who are working but poor tend to be clustered into agricultural and service jobs. Most working poor women are employed in service occupations, such as health aide, waitress, office cleaner, and child care worker. In fact, half of all working poor women who maintain families work in some type of service occupation. In addition to low wages, most of these jobs offer limited or no benefits, such as health insurance or sick

leave. It is estimated that two-thirds of all poor workers do not receive health insurance as a benefit of employment (U.S. News and World Report, 1988).

The lack of essential benefits, coupled with low wages, forces women into a serious economic dilemma. For example, if a working mother with one pre-school child is employed full time, year round at a minimum wage job, she earns $6,968 a year, or $536 a month. From that small amount, she must pay child care costs (which, according to the Conference Board, average $228 a month nationally per child), food, rent, utilities, clothing, medical expenses, transportation, taxes and other costs.

Clearly, it is nearly impossible to stretch such a small salary so far. Even the addition of non-cash assistance, such as food stamps or subsidized rent, is not sufficient to cover basic living expenses. And yet this is the situation of millions of working women and their families in America today. Despite the promise of financial reward, full-time employment leaves them far below the official poverty threshold. Their ongoing condition forces one to re-examine the relationship of work to poverty.

Minimum Wage Workers

Between 1978 and 1985, the number of Americans working full-time but living below the poverty line increased by fifty percent (Levitan and Shapiro 1987b). One reason for this growth is the minimum wage. Statistics show that over one-third of all minimum wage earners who work full time are poor. In fact, their

salaries are so low that if a family of four contains one full-time minimum wage worker and one part-time minimum wage worker, that family still lives in poverty.

Three out of five minimum wage earners are women. Nearly three million women earn minimum wage ($3.35 an hour), while almost as many women work for below minimum wage. In 1986, 3.3 million workers earned less than minimum wage. About two and a half million were women (Levitan and Shapiro 1987b). Under the Fair Labor Standards Act some businesses are exempt from paying federal minimum wage, such as certain small retail or service businesses not covered by interstate commerce law. States are allowed to set their own minimum basic rates and as of January, 1987, 20 states had hourly rates below the federal minimum. Five had rates as low as $1.40-$1.60 an hour, while nine other states had no state minimum wage (AFL/CIO 1987). Underpayment may also occur through employer violations of the minimum wage, particularly in farm work, in the needlework industry and in home-based work.

Contrary to popular perception, most minimum wage earners are not teenagers in after-school jobs. In fact, the numbers show that only about one-third of workers earning minimum wage are teenagers. Almost thirty percent of minimum wage earners are heads of household, and an additional twenty-eight percent are spouses (Levitan and Shapiro, 1987a). The economic stability of their families, dependent on these earnings, is being increasingly threatened, since the purchasing power of the

minimum wage has decreased by thirty percent in the last six years. Today, the minimum wage is at an all-time low compared to the average hourly wage paid to workers in general.

Established by Congress in 1938 to guarantee a floor below which wages should not drop, the minimum wage has been raised 15 times in 50 years. It was last raised in 1981. In the 1960s and 70s, the value of the minimum wage was sufficient to raise millions of families above the poverty line; while in the 80s, its value has declined sharply, increasing the numbers of the working poor. In 1986 for example, full-time, year-round minimum wage earnings for a family of three reached only four-fifths of the poverty threshold of $8,737.

In response, Congress is considering legislation to raise the minimum wage in order to reduce the number of people in poverty. Those opposing an increased wage argue that it would cause a loss of jobs, resulting in higher unemployment. However, a 1981 report by the Federal Minimum Wage Study Commission found that a ten percent increase in the minimum wage would decrease teenage employment by only one percent, with an even lower employment loss for adults.

For working women who head their own families, the link between the minimum wage and poverty is strong. Two out of every three families headed by a female minimum wage earner live below the poverty line. And for women who earn just above minimum wage, the news is not much better. Women constitute two-thirds of all low-wage workers earning between $3.35 and $5.00 an hour.

Although these wages may lift individuals above the poverty line, an annual salary based on $5.00 an hour is still not sufficient to raise a family of four or more above the threshold of poverty.

Minimum Wage Jobs

Almost half of all minimum wage workers (and most female minimum wage earners) are employed in service occupations such as private household work, food service, cleaning and building services. In 1984, for example, nearly one-third of all minimum wage workers were in food service jobs (Mellor and Haugen 1986). Three-fourths of all private household workers, more than half of all child care providers and twenty percent of all retail sales workers earn minimum wage or less. Nine out of ten minimum wage jobs come from private sector employers (Shapiro 1987).

Between 1973 and 1979, one in five newly created jobs in the United States was a low-wage job. In the following six years, that percentage more than doubled, so that by 1985, forty-four percent of all newly created jobs paid the 1986 equivalent of $7,400 or less a year for full-time work. This means that almost half of all the jobs created in the United States during the last decade paid at or close to poverty level wages. During the same time, high-wage jobs, paying the 1986 equivalent of $29,600 or above, decreased from fifty percet of new jobs to only ten percent of new jobs (Bluestone and Harrison 1986).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that nine out of 10 new jobs in the 1990s will be in the service sector, an increase from today's economy where seven out of 10 new jobs are in the

service sector. Although some of these new service jobs will be skilled and will pay high wages, it is projected that a significant number will be low paying with little or no chance for advancement.

This dramatic increase in minimum and low-wage jobs may lead to a two-tier society of rich and poor, according to some experts. Dependent on rapidly disappearing jobs in industries that paid healthy wages, such as auto and steel, generations of middle-income, blue-collar workers and their families are especially vulnerable as plants and factories close their doors.

As a result, the American dream of upward mobility and economic security is being replaced by a reality of frustrated expectations. Raised on the belief that dedication and hard work will result in a higher standard of living, more Americans will be working for low wages and finding the promise of economic security out of reach.

Part-Time Employment and Temporary Workers

Accompanying the increase in low-wage jobs has been the growth of part-time and temporary employment. Statistics reveal that almost one-third of all new jobs created in the United States since 1981 have been part time, that is, less than 35 hours a week. Three-quarters of these jobs are filled with involuntary part-time workers, so called because they would prefer full-time employment (Bluestone and Harrison 1986).

In general, part-time jobs pay low wages. The hourly wages of part-time workers average only fifty nine percent of the hourly earnings of full-time workers. Part-time workers averaged 22 hours a week in 1987 at a median wage of $4.42, while full-time workers earned $7.43 an hour (Levitan and Conway 1988). Two-thirds of hourly minimum wage workers worked part-time (Shapiro 1987).

Women make up a disproportionate share of part-time workers who earn low wages. In 1987, more than one female worker in four worked part-time. Women were three times as likely as men to choose part-time work, and the percentage of women working part-time involuntarily, because no full-time job was available, was also higher than for men.

In addition to low wages, part-time jobs usually provide few or no benefits, lack pension plans, and offer little opportunity for career advancement. Despite these serious drawbacks, because of family responsibilities, geographic location and other factors, part-time work is often the only alternative to unemployment for many women.

Like part-time work, temporary employment is also on the rise. In fact, the growth is so rapid that today nine out of 10 businesses use some form of temporary worker. Sixty-two percent of temporary workers are women, and three out of five work full-time as temps, the majority in clerical jobs (Howe 1986). These workers face the same problems as part-time employees: low wages, lack of job security and few or no benefits.

From the employer's point of view, using temporary workers helps cut labor costs and gives flexibility to a labor force that can be hired and let go during periods of rapid expansion and cutback. Costs of benefits (if any) are borne by the temporary agency which hires and pays the worker.

Many temporary workers choose the flexibility this field gives them. Temporary work is related to low income for the working poor when the only available jobs are seasonal, of short duration, or in short supply -- in other words, when the choice to work at permanent jobs is out of the worker's control.

Lost Jobs and Unemployment

Unemployment is closely linked to part-time and temporary employment. The working poor can typically experience a cycle of temporary employment, followed by a period of unemployment, followed by a period of part-time employment. At all points in the cycle, income is low and one's economic security is in jeopardy. In the worst case, a family's stability is lost as full-time employment at a living wage becomes more difficult to find and maintain. A homeless shelter in San Francisco reported that seventy percent of its homeless have work skills; ninety-two percent have high school diplomas; and thirty percent have college degrees -- dramatic evidence that many families are just a job away from homelessness and poverty (Harrington 1984).

Families maintained by women are especially vulnerable to this threat. For example, in 1986 two-thirds of all families maintained by women who were unemployed lived below the poverty

line. For unemployed black women, the risk increased to seventy-four percent, while for unemployed Hispanic women, it was sixty percent.

As America's high-paying manufacturing jobs continue to disappear, the risk of displacement and unemployment grows. A Labor Department study found that between 1981 and 1986, 10.8 million Americans over the age of 20 lost their jobs because of plant closings or large-scale layoffs. More than five million had been at those jobs for three years or more; one-third of these workers were women. The survey showed that half of these former blue-collar workers found new work either at part-time jobs or at jobs with lower earnings, many in the service sector. Re-employment was found to be even more difficult for black and Hispanic workers. It is significant that one in four white women, one in five black women, and one in three Hispanic women dropped out of the labor force altogether after being displaced (Horvath 1987).

Barriers to Higher Wage Jobs

As low-income women seek a better job future, many face external barriers which impede their progress. These barriers may consist of subtle or blatant forms of sex and race discrimination, lack of affordable child care, and limited education and training opportunities.

Need for Child Care

The lack of affordable, reliable child care is a significant barrier to many poor women finding and maintaining higher-wage employment. Faced with the lack of space at affordable or government-subsidized child care centers and with the frequent turnover of the caregivers that can be found, working poor women must rely on a patchwork system of care for their children that too frequently falls apart.

Child care costs eat up a significant percentage of the wages of minimum and low-wage workers. For example, the average cost of preschool child care is $228 a month per child. This amounts to forty-three percent of a full-time minimum wage worker's income.

Some federally-subsidized child care is available to all low-income mothers but in reality is no solution for most working poor mothers. Openings in publicly-funded day care centers are extremely limited, resulting in waiting lists that can stretch to two years or more.

As a result of prohibitive costs and long waiting lists, many working poor women rely on relatives and friends to care for their children. However, this is an unstable arrangement at best, since the caregivers themselves move in and out of the work force to meet their own income needs. Many working poor mothers alternate periods of work with periods of caring for their children and often end up with a sporadic work history. This effectively can keep them in low-wage jobs. In addition to

moving in and out of the full-time labor force, many working poor mothers take part-time jobs to solve their child care problems, thereby reducing their income even further.

Forced to rely on child care they can afford, which often turns out to be unreliable, low-income mothers have reduced choices when it comes to work. Jobs that require overtime or travel, or that are located long distances from home are not a possibility for most low-income mothers because they cannot afford the back-up support necessary to care for their children. Most jobs with career ladders require a commitment that many working poor mothers are unable to give because of their family responsibilities. Without child care that is affordable and dependable, working poor mothers are put into a bind that causes them to sacrifice job satisfaction, higher wages and advancement for the welfare of their children.

Occupational Segregation and Wage Discrimination

Most working poor women are employed in female-dominated jobs where they earn less than men. In fact, most of the work force is segregated by sex even among nonpoor working women. A significant factor in the male/female wage gap, which stood at 64¢ to the dollar in 1986, is occupational segregation. According to Census Bureau data, the earnings gap for women of color compared to white males is even wider: Black women earn 56¢ for every $1.00 earned by white men; Hispanic women, 53¢.

The arbitrary division of work into male and female jobs has historical, cultural and economic roots. From the earliest days of the Industrial Revolution, the work women were paid to do closely paralleled the unpaid work they did in the home: sewing, preparing food, caregiving, and maintaining the household. Since females were viewed by employers as bringing home secondary wages for formerly unpaid tasks, a low wage was also considered a fair wage. As recently as the 1950s, it was so common to pay women less than men that some employer manuals instructed managers to deduct twenty percent from a job's wages if it was done by a woman (IUE v. Westinghouse 1980).

Those days of legalized wage discrimination are past, and one might think that the barriers to employment opportunity for women have fallen. However, stubborn resistance continues to hit significant numbers of women who seek higher paid, male-dominated jobs. They, in turn, are not replaced by men seeking female jobs because of those jobs' low wages and societal stereotyping. This lack of job cross-over perpetuates a two-tier wage system in which millions of women work for poverty-level wages.

Sex-based wage discrimination results when wage setting is based on the sex of the worker rather than on the skills, effort and responsibility required to do the job. A comparison of weekly full-time earnings for traditional female and male jobs in nonprofessional occupations employing a large number of U.S. workers shows the discrepancy at a glance:

Traditional female jobs

Occupation	Percent female, 1987	1987 Median weekly earnings
Secretaries	98%	$299
Bookkeepers	91%	$297
Nursing Aides	88%	$212
Cashiers	79%	$183
Textile Sewing Machine Operators	90%	$183
Waitresses	80%	$178

Traditional male jobs

Occupation	Percent male, 1987	1987 Median weekly earnings
Retail Sales, Commodities	85%	$550
Machinists	97%	$450
Protective Service	89%	$427
Construction Workers	99%	$402
Truck Drivers	98%	$388
Janitors & Cleaners	78%	$275

(Source: U.S. DOL, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.)

Pay equity, incorporating the principle of comparable worth, is an important goal of a fair wage-setting process which eliminates sex and race discrimination and thereby improves the possibility of raising wages for working women in poverty. Re-evaluation of jobs must compare those which may be dissimilar in nature but equal or equivalent in terms of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions. In the past several years, both labor unions and women's advocates have worked with state and local governments to investigate and remedy pay inequities based on sex and race discrimination. Collective bargaining, legislation, voluntary initiatives and litigation

have resulted in salary upgrades, implementation of job evaluation systems, and wage increases for public employees in 17 states. These gains have affected the lowest-wage public jobs in those states. But, to date, pay equity has not expanded far enough into the private sector and has yet to affect most working poor women.

Education and Training to be Poor

Perhaps most disturbing of all, the education and training women and girls receive often prepares them for a lifetime of poverty-level wages. A look at the different vocational education choices of school-age boys and girls, as well as the choice of college majors by men and women, indicates a future of continuing occupational segregation well into the 21st century, with a probable accompanying gap in wages.

A review of publicly-funded job training and welfare employment programs reveals the same pattern of sex segregation. Most women enrolled in programs funded by the federal Job Training Partnership Act receive classroom training for such jobs as clerk-typist, word processor, home health aide or nurse assistant, while the majority of men in the same program might receive on-the-job training in higher-paying jobs such as auto mechanic or apprenticeship trades in construction (Solow 1986). Statistics on state-funded welfare employment programs reveal a similar picture in which women are being trained for female-dominated low-wage clerical and service jobs. Thus, both state

and federally-funded programs do an inadequate job of lifting women out of poverty and enhancing their long-range employability. The programs may be effective in removing women from the welfare rolls, but by transferring them to the ranks of the working poor, they have done little to increase female economic self-sufficiency.

The Catch-22 for low-income women is that, although education is no guarantee of an economically secure future, lack of education is an almost insurmountable handicap. Of women who don't complete high school, more than half spend their adult lives in poverty. A high school diploma improves one's odds: eleven percent of women who had finished high school were living at or below the poverty line in 1986. However, the path to economic self-sufficiency is steeper for minority women. Statistics show that approximately twenty percent of minority women who have one or more years of college continue to live in poverty -- many working in low-wage jobs.

Another barrier to higher wage jobs is functional illiteracy: the lack of reading, writing, problem solving and math skills necessary to function in the modern world. Working women who are poor are more likely to have a literacy problem than nonpoor women. A woman who is functionally illiterate may be unable to fill out the job application for the job she really wants. Advancement out of a low-skill job is almost impossible without enhancing her basic skills. However, women typically face serious barriers to increasing their literacy levels. For

example, those in low-paying jobs have few if any employer-sponsored opportunities for on-the-job training. Community-based job training programs for women often do not include comprehensive literacy-skill training. Women with children, especially single mothers, almost always need support services, such as child care, in order to take advantage of literacy programs, and few are available. In addition, many job-training programs exclude women who read at less than a fifth-grade level. The impact of these barriers on poor women perpetuates their inability to advance on the job or even to get a job in the first place.

Just as important is the impact of their illiteracy on their children. Experts know that the greatest predictor of a child's educational success is the literacy of the child's mother. Therefore, increasing literacy among women, especially single household heads, not only increases their value as workers but may also have long-term positive impact on the future economic well-being of their children as well.

It is clear that a significant number of low-wage workers also have low skills. However, in remedying this situation, it is crucial to remember that education and training programs for women must be targeted carefully, with their special needs in mind and with the goal of long-range employability and economic independence.

Conclusion

Americans who work steadily at jobs but remain in poverty offer dramatic proof that all is not well in today's economy. Women who have been long-term members of the working poor are an especially stark reminder that the American promise of a decent life for its workers has yet to be extended to significant numbers of our population. Such women, many of whom are working at minimum wage jobs and supporting children, can find no easy way out of poverty. A combination of factors, including low wages for most female jobs, lack of appropriate skills and training, and inadequate child care, keeps more than four and one half million working women poor.

As the plight of the working poor increasingly captures national attention and as solutions are being proposed and debated, it is essential to keep in mind the particular factors that contribute to the poverty of working women. Issues of discrimination, education and training, and child care must shape the remedies that will be crafted by our national leaders. Otherwise, the effort will not be spent well and women and their families will remain poor.

Despite the enormity of the task, understanding the problem of the working poor and designing strategies to alleviate and eliminate their situation must begin today. Far too much is at stake to delay. The health of our national economy and the well-being of U.S. workers are inextricably bound together. Both depend on those workers being able to earn a living wage. Until

this connection is understood, millions of working women and their children will continue in economic jeopardy. The acute nature of their situation demands that all sectors of society do their best to eliminate that contradiction in terms "working but poor" in America.

Recommendations

Following are WOW's recommendations for improving conditions for working poor women. The recommendations speak specifically to what employers, legislators, union leaders, educators and media representatives can do.

The Corporate Sector:

* Employers and employees should work together to design strategies that will provide minimum benefits of health insurance, sick leave, and family leave to all workers, including pro-rated benefits for part-time workers.
* Sex and race discrimination must be eliminated from the wage-setting process.
* On-the-job training which results in career ladders for low-wage workers should be provided to women as well as men.
* Employers must be made aware of the mutual benefit in safeguarding the job security of their employees, particularly for those in full-time jobs, and also be aware of the potential loss of productivity in part-time or leased work.

The Public Sector:

* Legislators should raise the federal minimum wage.
* Legislation should be passed that will assist employers to provide health, parental leave and dependent care policies.
* The Congress must enact an effective national child care policy.
* Federal and state governments must fund education and training programs which train women for jobs with decent wages; while providing them with access to affordable, high-quality dependent care.
* Federal and state wage protection laws must be enforced.

The Union Sector:

* Labor unions should strengthen organizing efforts in jobs such as child care worker, health care aide, food service worker, clerical worker, and other female-dominated, low-wage jobs.
* Union negotiations must include pay equity, family leave and other issues essential to low-wage women workers.

The Education and Training Sector:

* Teachers and administrators must examine and eliminate institutional practices which channel women and girls into low-wage occupations.

* Training and retraining opportunities targeted for working poor women must be increased throughout the educational system and tied to subsidized dependent care and transportation.
* Greater access to educational programs must be provided for working poor women with limited literacy and educational skills.

The Media and Communications Sector:

* Television and radio broadcasters should produce reports on work and poverty in America that investigate the barriers to equity for women.
* Issues most relevant to working poor women must be included in news features about poverty.
* Prime-time television shows should increase the visibility and improve the realistic portrayal of working class women in entertainment programming.

These recommendations are not revolutionary. In fact, many are common sense strategies related to laws already in effect in our land. An interwoven theme throughout all the sectors, however, is the need for new leadership and advocacy on behalf of workers who, despite their labor, still live in poverty. No one sector alone can solve the problem. It will take a strong partnership among policy and business leaders, educators, labor unions and the media to devise effective solutions.

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